

Theater Offerings and Stage Chat.



Edna May's Farewell

Daintiness and femininity are characteristic of Edna May; there is a certain shy girlishness in her manner, a slight reticence in talking of herself, as if she shrank from rather than courted publicity; and here you have a mental picture of this little American girl who won her first big success in London, taking the great English capital by storm.

Nature has been kind to Edna May, and she in turn has had the good sense to stick to nature. Therein lies her chiefest charm. A girl with a head not quite so level would have been spoiled by Edna May's triumphs, for this comparatively obscure little American sang one night in London and woke the next morning to find herself famous, to have all the critics proclaiming her as London's discovery, and to find that her stock had risen many points by her performance of the night before.

The result? Just what those who knew Edna May best would expect of her. "I am glad, very glad," she said simply when she was shown her press notices and was told that her success had been phenomenal. "I wanted so much to please; how can I help feeling proud and very happy?"

Miss May flushes like a school girl when talking about herself. She will fence with her interviewer skillfully, but if the interviewer knows his business, ineffectually, to have the conversation take something, anything except a personal turn; but when she finds the case is hopeless, she submits with grace and cheerfulness.

"Do I prefer England to America?" She repeated the question with a shy smile. "That is invariably asked me since the announcement that I am to return to London in March for a long stay. How can I really prefer England, and yet, how can I say anything except that I am glad to go back when I remember how London received me?"

"It is hard to answer that question. You see, I was born in the State of New York, and my parents still live there. It was there that my childhood and young girlhood were passed; there that I dreamed so many, many happy dreams; had such lovely visions of the future. How can any other place be quite so dear?"

"Later I went to New York, in pursuit of a profession and a fortune, and, as I look back on it all, I have succeeded beyond my highest hopes. No other country but America will ever be home, really home, to me, and I look forward to the time when I shall return to be permanently, have a cozy little place of my own and live quietly and happily among my people in the only land that an American girl can truly love."

"My first night in London? Shall I ever forget it? Even now I shiver as I look back at that one test night when for the first time I faced a London audience, realizing that upon its verdict rested my success or failure. How I went through the performance I never knew. It was at the Shaftesbury Theater, and the play was 'The Belle of New York,' in which I made my first success in America. I did my best, that is, the best that I could in the face of extreme nervousness, which really amounted to positive fright, but when I left the stage I was sure that I had met with disastrous failure and that the only reason I was not 'booed' was because the audience was sorry for poor little me."

"When the other members of the company told me I had scored a big success, I said that also to sympathy, but it helped me to go and finish the play. 'Of course, everyone knows the rest—that London liked me, and that 'The Belle of New York' became the talk of the town. I shall never cease to love that first-night London audience. 'So, I am glad to go back to England, where I am to stay for some years, and I would be ungrateful indeed not to look forward to meeting my many friends there. Yet some day I hope to return to America with a play and a company that will please theatergoers on this side of the water even more than have my earlier successes. It is for this return that I am looking forward even before I say good-by.'"



MARION SHERKLEY IN
"OLD KENTUCKY."
ACADEMY.



THE KOREAN GIRLS IN
"THE SHO GUN"
COLUMBIA.

The Latest Stage Celebrity

At a time when great personalities in the world of the theater seem to be swiftly diminishing in numbers, the coming to the English-speaking stage of an actress of the temperament, training, and emotional qualities of Bertha Kalich is extremely interesting. The story of what she has already done in the drama of other tongues than ours is remarkable. The story, yet to be written, of what she hopes to do may be more remarkable still. The fact of the moment is that Bertha Kalich, who this season makes her debut as an English-speaking star, under the direction of Harrison Grey Fiske, in Maeterlinck's "Monna Vanna," is a woman of such personality and promise that it behooves every lover of stage craft to make mental note of her progress.

Madame Kalich was born in the city of Lemberg, Galicia, thirty years ago. She came of a family in no way connected with the stage, nor in sympathy with it. The little girl, however, evidenced dramatic temperament at a very early age, and when a singer of the Lemberg opera came to live in the house across the street from her home, the child spent hours each day at the window watching and listening to the practicing of her distinguished neighbor. And on one glad day the prima donna noticed the wistful, interested face of the child over the way, and they became friends. This friendship led, eventually, to the admission of Bertha Kalich as a vocal student to the Conservatory of Lemberg.

At the age of fourteen the girl had advanced as far in her musical studies that she received an offer from the manager of the local opera company to sing small parts in his productions. The offer was accepted with misgivings by the parents—with delight by the girl herself. Soon she was advanced to important roles, and after a season or two at Lemberg she was engaged as a member of the company at the Bucharest National Theater. There she remained until she became leading lady—in dramatic as well as in musical productions. Her position now established, she went as visiting star to many cities of Roumania, Poland, Galicia, and Russia; playing in the various tongues of the places in which she appeared.

In the midst of her European triumphs there came to Mrs. Kalich the manager of one of the Jewish theaters in New York city with an offer to engage for a long period as a member of his company. The word America conjured to her mind splendid dreams of success—none of those dreams were the equals of the realities that have already been hers. She came to New York ten years ago, and immediately became the idol of the foreign theater-going population. The American play-goer may scarcely be able to realize what a position of honor the popular player of the foreign theaters in New York holds in the eyes of his or her audiences. There is an admiration almost amounting to reverence there that our American playgoer never knows.

Mme. Kalich tasted to the full the delight of this adulation, and she took advantage of it by leading her willing followers into the highest realms of dramatic literature, following her own hitherto plays of Shakespeare, Ibsen, Tolstol, Sudermann, Hauptmann, Sardou, and that greatest of Jewish dramatists, Jacob Gordin. But while she was doing these great things at the Thalia Theater, there came to her a new dream of ambition. She saw in the American playhouses a larger public before which she wished to appear; and for six years she devoted her every leisure hour to the study of English—in the hope that some day her dream might be realized.

Opportunity came at length, when, last spring, she was enabled to essay the role of "Fedora," in English, at an up-town theater. Mr. Fiske, who had long admired her performances in the foreign theaters, at once saw that she was thoroughly prepared to step forward as an English-speaking actress of the highest class, and he made an engagement with her that she should star under his management for a term of years. "Monna Vanna" was selected as the play best suited for her advent and the success of the star and the production at the Manhattan Theater proves that Mme. Kalich is an actress to be reckoned with in all future considerations of the dramatic art in America.

A Role That Many Women Have Played

Madge Brierly, the heroine of the Dazey melodrama, "In Old Kentucky," offers opportunities to a young actress that few players have the courage to refuse. The part is "grateful" in that Madge is always sacrificing herself for those she loves, and she is always doing heroic things. She swings across a chasm on a rope and saves her lover's life by throwing a lighted bomb over the precipice; she rushes into a burning stable and brings Queen Bess, the hero's race horse, to safety; she rides the same horse to victory in the great Ashland stakes, and so saves the hero's fortune, and, finally, she gives her hand to this hero, the man she loves.

The role has been played by several women distinguished in the world of the theater. The first of the Madges was Marion Elnore, who played the part only four times. She was the soubrette of a summer stock company, and the part fell to her when the play was "tried out" by the company. Brilliant, gifted, beautiful, unhappy Bettina Gerard was the next of the Madges, and her fascinating personality helped greatly in making "In Old Kentucky" one of the remarkable successes of the day. Laura Purl was the next actress to try the part, and she made it almost her own. She gave it up, however, to go into higher things—she was Sir Henry Irving's leading woman on his last tour of America, playing Helen of Swabia, in "Dante," and other important roles.

Lulu Tabor, who is now married and living in New York, was another of the Dazey heroine impersonators. She played the part for a season or two, and then deserted it for matrimony. Affie Warner, daughter of Neil Warner, the tragedian, followed Miss Tabor. Then came pretty Elsa Ryan, who for two seasons rescued Frank Layson from the various perils which are his portion. Miss Ryan has become an established New York favorite in musical plays, and she seldom leaves the metropolis, although she went with the George Edwards' company to Australia a year ago. Alice Treat Hunt took up the part when Miss Ryan let it go, and for a season she rode Queen Bess to victory. Miss Hunt is at the head of a stock company in the South, and Miss Warner is leading woman in one of the Philadelphia stock companies.

Delightfully ingenious Bessie Barriscale—a mere child when she undertook the part—played Madge for two seasons. It was during her engagement in the part that she confessed to a secret actor,riage to Sumner Gard, a fellow-actor. She belongs to one of the most remarkable theatrical families in this country. She has a brother and sister, children, on the stage, and is first cousin to the Talliaferros, Mabel and Edith, while the Burts, including Laura and the

Behind the Footlights

The conscientiousness which shows itself so readily in E. S. Willard's work is reflected in his attitude toward authors who have furnished him plays. The actor steadfastly refuses to give any of the lines in his plays other than through the medium of practical enactment. When asked recently for the invocation at the close of the second act in "The Middleman," Mr. Willard refused, saying the manuscript was not his and he, therefore, could not grant the request.

Edgar Sekwyn will soon appear in the principal part of "It's All Your Fault," a farce that is credited with success in London under the title of "The Adoption of Archibald." The play will be produced in Rochester in March and will then go into New York for a run.

Amy Ricard has become a member of the cast presenting Channing Pollock's play, "The Little Grey Lady." Miss Ricard will be remembered for her good work in "The College Widow" and also with Mary Manning as the girl from Butte, Montana, in "The Stubbornness of Geraldine." Stephen Gratton, a former local stock player is also a member of the cast.

Mabel Talliaferro will go to Australia as leading woman with William Collier. Miss Talliaferro tried a starring tour in "In the Bishop's Carriage" which did not prove a success, and is now in Yiddishville. She was the "Lovely Mary" of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch."

Willard Spencer, composer of "The Princess Bonnie" and "The Little Teacup," has completed a new opera, in which the Five Noses will give their well-known act. The name of the opera has not been made known. Robert Broderick, now with "Fantana," will sing one of the principal roles.

Henry Woodruff will be the star in "Brown of Harvard," when the play is produced tomorrow night at the Princess Theater, New York. The greatest feature of the supporting company will be John Lovett, who has been known to Harvard students since 1887 as "John, the Orange Man." He has been put into the play and has been persuaded to play "himself" in "Brown of Harvard."

Mr. Lovett was escorted from Cambridge to New York last week by Mr. Woodruff and several other Harvard alumni to rehearse with the company.

Charlotte Walker, a local favorite, is playing still another part this season.

This time it is the principal feminine role in "The Triangle," a four-act play by Rupert Hughes, which was produced in New York last week. Miss Walker has been to Washington twice, once in "The Prodigal Son" and recently with Lawrence O'Sway. She also played the lead in "The Prince Chap" earlier in the season.

Chrystal Herne has rejoined Arnold Daly and is again playing the lead in "You Never Can Tell." Miss Herne went to London shortly after the disastrous performance of "Mrs. Warren's Profession" and became leading woman with H. B. Irving in "The Jury of Fate." The failure of that play and the trouble Mr. Daly has been having with leading women recently led to her return to America.

Henry Miller has become discouraged with the business management of theaters and will hereafter direct his energies only from the stage end of the house. Miller has not, however, relinquished his interest in the Princess Theater, New York, which has afforded him a neat little bonus this season.

"The Redskin," William A. Brady's play, the name of which has been many times changed, will be produced for the first time in the East tomorrow night in New Haven. It will be disclosed in New York the following Thursday. Katherine Grey has the leading feminine role and eleven Sioux Indians have been brought from Nebraska for a ghost dance, one of the features in the play.

Richard Mansfield has reasons to feel proud that Mme. Sarah Bernhardt has offered to act as his manager for a season of sixteen plays in Paris next year. The great French actress knows an artist when she sees one, and her offer to Mr. Mansfield is a tribute to his genius of which he may well be proud.

Miss Annie Russell will sail for home after a very successful engagement in London, on March 10. She opens in a new play in Boston, on April 9.

Maurice Kirby, well known in newspaper circles in Washington, will manage the company which is to present "A Yankee Circus" at the Auditorium Theater, Chicago. Mr. Kirby was recently with "The Gingerbread Man."

Stage Gossip From Gotham

By JAMES GRANT PRESTON.

NEW YORK, Feb. 24.—Perhaps the reappearance in New York of Madame Yvette Guilbert was the most noteworthy event of the week in matters theatrical.

Madame Guilbert has changed mightily since her last appearance in New York, both physically and artistically. There can be no doubt that in both senses the change has been an improvement. There is more of the former chansonette, and she is decidedly a better singer. Her dresses are dreams and are exact reproductions of the costumes of the time, which they represent.

All the same I am not fully prepared to admit that the French singer is altogether as charming as she was in the old days. There is no denying the fact, however, that she is an artist to her finger tips, and the crowded houses which have greeted her at the Lyceum have been delighted with her quaint songs and the quaint costumes. The first-night audience was a critical one, made up, in a large measure, of professional people and musical experts, and it appeared to be thoroughly satisfied with "Deux Siècles de Chansons."

Among the first performances which are worthy of notice, were those of the Manhattan; "The Title Mart," by Winston Churchill, at the Madison Square; "Myritz-Pyritz," by Wilhelm Justus, at the Irving Place, with Lina Abrahm of the Irving place on Tuesday and Ludwig Fulda's "Masquerade" at the Irving Place on Saturday. Calve sang in concert at Carnegie Hall Thursday, and it can be safely said that there is nothing the matter with her voice, nor with her acting. She does not seem to grow old and her magnificent organ still charms all who are permitted the privilege of hearing it.

The fourteenth week of grand opera at the Metropolitan Opera House began Monday with a performance of "Der Meistersinger," with Bella Altieri, Madame Homer and Messieurs Knote, Vanroy, and Goritz in the cast. Washington's Birthday was marked by morning's performance of "Parsifal," with Miss Fromstrad as Kundry, and Burgstaller in the title role. This was the last performance of "Parsifal" for this season. The remainder of the week was without anything noteworthy, except that Mr. Hertz has apparently reached the conclusion that even in Wagner the singers and the audience have some rights which the orchestra is bound to respect, and so modified the vigor of his musicians that it was possible to keep track of what was going on on the stage.

The big men among the managers are preparing for their annual trips abroad on the hunt for novelties and attractions. Charles Frohman sailed on the Kaiser Wilhelm II on Tuesday, and expects to be gone for several months. He takes with him a number of his American successes for presentation in

his European theaters, and can be depended upon to bring back a number of European attractions in exchange.

Oscar Hammerstein expects to sail next week mainly for the purpose of clinching a contract with the great Polish tenor, Jean De Reszke. Mr. Hammerstein expects to sign other famous singers for his Manhattan Opera House, and will visit France, Italy, and Germany in the search.

Marc Klaw, of Klaw & Erlanger, is also making his preparations to sail for England some time in April. He has watched the success of Mr. Frohman on the other side of the pond, and has come to the conclusion that dollars are to be made in the theatrical business in England. His firm proposes, I understand, to secure control of some of the London playhouses, and it is possible will reach out to Paris and Berlin as well. Other managers are also looking up sailing dates.

George Edwards, the noted London manager, has decided to try a new experiment at the Empire Music Hall. He proposes to issue 500 season tickets at £10 each, which will admit their holders to the famous promenade. Speaking of the innovation, Mr. Edwards said:

"Hundreds of people subscribed to Sandown and Kompton, and the lounge at the Empire offers just as good value to men with time to pass as many of the clubs they support. I believe the idea will be popular."

Another chorus girl has joined the ranks of the British peerage. Frances Belmont, who gained fame in the chorus, has swapped the tinsel of the stage for the solid comfort of a baron's coronet. She is now Lady Ashburton, her husband being the head of the famous Harling family. He is rich, and Lady Ashburton will only have to sing and dance as she chooses hereafter.

Among the noted foreigners in the city today, is Dr. Ludwig Fulda, the author of "The Tallisman" and other well-known plays. Dr. Fulda is a pupil of Paul Meysse and has earned the Schiller prize, although the Kaiser refused to permit him to receive it, on the ground that "The Tallisman" which earned it was a satire on monarchy. Dr. Fulda is not only a successful dramatic author, but is a fabulist of note.

A niece by marriage of Secretary of State Root is soon to make her debut in New York as a dramatic author. She is Mrs. Ivy Ashton Root, and her husband is a nephew of Secretary Root. Her play "Mozart's Romance," has been successful on the road, and will be given a New York hearing as soon as arrangements can be made.

Perugini, the former famous tenor, is now a Wall Street broker. If the bulls and bears get after him in earnest they doubtless will make him sing his best.